

44 Nottingham Street  
Northmead, NSW 2152  
AUSTRALIA

15 January 2024

Dear Friends and Supporters:

Greetings in Jesus' name! Here in Australia we are accustomed to droughts. When we first arrived here in 1993 much of the country had seen little or no rain for as long as eight years. But then the heavens opened, so to speak, and the rains came and brought floods our way!

The ministry here has seemed to follow a similar pattern. We can go for long, long spells when it seems that nothing much is happening. And then the showers of blessing come and we find ourselves busier than we had anticipated.

Over the past few months we have seen some amazing things happen. For so many years our church was comprised of mostly Asian folks. We have certainly enjoyed them. But we went for a long time without much in the way of growth in numbers. Then quite unexpectedly we began to have Middle Eastern people visiting our services, mainly from Iran and Iraq. A few of them have stayed on with us, and several have been saved. One Persian couple recently asked to be baptized and have said that they want to share publicly their testimony of how the Gospel has drawn them out of Islam to Christ. They are inviting their families and friends to witness the occasion, something that is truly significant in Muslim families and relationships.

We were also a bit discouraged that there were so few young adults in our congregation. Now we are blessed to have several couples and singles worshipping with us regularly, some taking membership and taking on significant roles in our church's worship and life. One young man has recently enrolled in an online seminary program, he and his young wife both declaring their desire to spend their life together serving the Lord. It has been thrilling to see a generation that had for so long been absent from our numbers coming to have such a prominent place among us.

Annette and I are well. Annette is enjoying a break from teaching at the preschool. But she is also looking forward to a new year in just a couple of weeks. One of her coworkers will be a young Malaysian Chinese lady with whom we became acquainted while she was doing her university studies near to us. She is a Christian girl, and was all alone here. She had expressed her desire to work with preschool children and to have a ministry to them. Once again we sensed the Lord's blessing and rejoice that we are where we are to have met her and guided her on her way.

I had an unexpected phone call this morning from a guy I have known for more than ten years but had not heard from for a long time. He and his wife are lovely people, both Roman Catholics. I have on several occasions shared with them how I came to trust in Jesus. They have always listened politely without commenting. I have prayed regularly for them for years, believing that God is still able to penetrate hard hearts. My friend called to invite Annette and

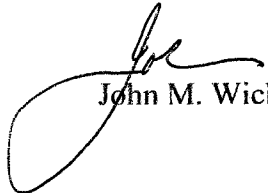
me to meet them for lunch on Friday. Like myself he is a veteran of the Vietnam War. I regularly receive news from some of our Christian friends in Vietnam along with pictures of their churches. So it will make for natural conversation to show them the photos and to share our experiences with the churches in Vietnam.

Annette and I hope perhaps to visit Vietnam again this year. It is nothing short of astonishing to see how the Gospel is spreading there. I am prohibited from preaching there (and my Vietnamese isn't sufficient for me to be able to do so even if the government were to allow it). But the Vietnamese Christians we have met there have always seemed greatly encouraged when we have just been able to spend time with them and pray with them. New churches are popping up all around that country, and for the time being at least the Communist government there is allowing them freedom to worship as they please.

Well, I began this letter with an analogy of weather phenomena. Though it is normally unbearably hot and dry here at this time of year, it has been raining for the past couple of days, and it looks like there is more to come. How refreshing and encouraging it is to be blessed so unexpectedly! And the blessings to our ministry here of late have likewise refreshed and revitalized us. We are every moment conscious of God's working in response to prayers made in our behalf. I hope that you will continue to remember us before the Throne of Grace.

I sincerely hope also that you will know how much we appreciate your part in making our service in this part of the "vineyard" possible. And I am confident that the Lord will bless you for your kindnesses toward us and the people whom He brings into our lives here! I continue to be . . .

Your servant for Jesus' sake,



John M. Wickline